



United States Attorney District of New Jersey

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NEWARK, NEW JERSEY MAN CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH TWO ESSEX COUNTY CARJACKINGS

NEWARK, N.J. – An Essex County, N.J., man appeared in Newark federal court today for allegedly carjacking two vehicles on the same day in Essex County, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Jahlil Thomas, 21, of Newark, is charged in a four-count Complaint filed late yesterday in response to the January 12, 2011, incidents. The defendant is charged with two counts of theft of a motor vehicle by force, violence and intimidation; one count of use of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence; and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. The defendant appeared this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Claire C. Cecchi and was detained.

According to the criminal Complaint:

On the afternoon of January 12, 2011, Thomas approached a man who had just parked his Lincoln, pointed a black shotgun at the victim, and ordered him to get out of the car and lie on the ground.

About 20 minutes after driving away in the stolen vehicle, Thomas began tailing the second victim, who pulled over to let the Lincoln pass. The defendant stopped directly in front of the second victim, who was then ordered out of her Durango at gunpoint. Thomas drove away in the stolen Durango, abandoning the Lincoln on the street with its doors open.

Later that afternoon, officers of the Newark Police Department observed the stolen Durango traveling at a high rate of speed. They activated their sirens and followed the stolen Durango, which crashed into three vehicles. Thomas got out of the car, dropped the shotgun, and ran with the officers in pursuit, who caught and arrested him.

The charge of carjacking (Counts One and Three) carries a maximum potential penalty of 15 years in prison; 25 years in prison if serious bodily injury results; and life in prison or the federal death penalty if death results. The charge of use of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence (Count Two) carries a maximum potential penalty of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 7 years for brandishing the weapon, which would run consecutive to any other prison term. The felon in possession charge (Count Four) carries a maximum potential penalty of 10 years in prison. Each of the four counts also carries a maximum fine of \$250,000.

The arrest and charges are part of a cooperative effort between federal, state and local law

enforcement to address the recent spike in carjackings in Essex County.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI's Violent Crimes/Fugitive Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward in Newark; the Newark Police Department, under the leadership of Director Gary F. McCarthy; and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Acting Prosecutor Robert D. Laurino, with the investigation leading to the charges.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jane H. Yoon of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

The charges and allegations contained in the Complaint are merely accusations and the defendant is considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Anyone who has information which may be relevant to this case is encouraged to contact the Newark Division of the FBI at 973-792-3000.

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Defense counsel: Candace Hom, Assistant Federal Public Defender, Newark